

REMARKS

The Office Action of October 17, 2007 was received and carefully reviewed. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the currently pending rejections are requested for the reasons advanced in detail below. Filed concurrently herewith is a *Request for a Two Month Extension of Time* which extends the shortened statutory period of response to March 17, 2008. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that this response is being timely filed.

By this amendment, claims 1 and 3-6 are amended and claims 2 and 7-15 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, claims 1 and 3-6 are currently pending in the instant application.

The Abstract of the Disclosure is objected to for improper language and/or format. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully amend the Abstract to be limited to less than 150 words, and to recite proper language. Applicants respectfully assert that the presently-amended Abstract is both proper in language and format, and respectfully request that the objection to the Abstract be withdrawn.

The Specification is objected to for a minor typographical error. Accordingly, Applicants have amended the Specification to correct this error. Applicants respectfully note that the publication of the instant application (US 2007/0114499 A1), at paragraph [0033], correctly shows that which Applicants have presently amended. Thus, based either upon the present amendments to the Specification or the published application, Applicants respectfully request that the objection to the Specification be withdrawn.

The Specification is further objected to for presenting claims 1-15 in a format where the individual lines of text are too closely spaced apart. Accordingly, Applicants present the pending claims, as shown herein, in a one and one-half spacing format. Applicants respectfully request that the objection to the claims portion of the Specification be withdrawn.

Claims 1--15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over various combinations of Kawasumi et al. (US 4,309,457), Kawasumi et al. (US 5,512,379), Cheon et al. (US 6,783,569), Kasai et al. (JP 08-176605), and Teichmann (US 4,711,814). Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for at least the following reasons.

Independent claim 1, as amended, recites a method for producing a metal micropowder having a uniform particle diameter which comprises sequential steps of “preparing an aqueous solution *in which two salts of metals having oxidation-reduction potentials which differ from each other are dissolved*” and “bringing an *organic* reducing agent

into contact with the aqueous solution in the presence of a protective colloid,” (emphasis added). In direct contrast to Applicants’ claimed invention, Kawasumi et al. (‘457) merely teaches coating a separately prepared metallic powder with other metal salt under reducing conditions, and is completely silent with regard to preparing a solution having two *dissolved salts* of metals having oxidation-reduction potentials which differ from each other and use of an organic reducing agent. Kawasumi et al. (‘457) specifically requires a metallic powder that is NOT dissolved in an aqueous medium. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that Kawasumi et al. (‘457) fails to teach or suggest the combination of features recited by independent claim 1.

In further contrast to Applicants’ claimed invention, Kawasumi et al. (‘379) merely employs a separately prepared core material. Thus, Applicants respectfully assert that Kawasumi et al. (‘379) fails to correct the deficiencies of Kawasumi et al. (‘457), as detailed above, with regard to the Applicants’ presently claimed invention, as recited by at least independent claim 1.

With regard to Teichmann, Applicants respectfully assert that the method disclosed by Teichmann is directed toward a method of producing a metal particle by an electroless plating method. Accordingly, the Office Action relies upon Cheon et al. for remedying the admitted deficiencies of Teichmann. Specifically, the Office Action relies upon Cheon et al. for allegedly teaching a method for producing core-shell type metallic nanoparticles involving (i) a dispersion of a first metal (core) as nanoparticles in an organic solvent; (ii) providing a metallic precursor containing a second metal (shell) in an organic solvent, in which the second metal has a higher reduction potential than the first; and (iii) combining the dispersion of (i) and (ii) to form a core-shell type nanoparticles. However, Applicants respectfully assert that Cheon et al. employs separately prepared nanoparticles for the core materials, and is completely silent with regard to preparing double-layered fine particles from two metal salts *dissolved* in a colloidal solution. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that the combined teachings of Teichmann and Cheon et al. fails to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness with regard to at least independent claim 1.

In addition, Applicants respectfully assert that Kasai et al. fails to remedy the deficiencies of each of Kawasumi et al., Kawasumi et al., Cheon et al. (US 6,783,569), Teichmann. Specifically, the combination of Kasai et al. with any one Kawasumi et al., Kawasumi et al., Cheon et al. (US 6,783,569), Teichmann fails to teach or suggest a method for producing a metal micropowder having a uniform particle diameter which comprises se-

quential steps of “preparing an aqueous solution *in which two salts of metals having oxidation-reduction potentials which differ from each other are dissolved*” and “bringing an *organic* reducing agent into contact with the aqueous solution in the presence of a protective colloid,” as required by at least independent claim 1, and hence dependent claims 3-6.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of record be reconsidered and withdrawn by the Examiner, that claims 1-25 be allowed, and that the application be passed to issue. If a conference would expedite prosecution of the instant application, the Examiner is hereby invited to telephone the undersigned to arrange such a conference.

Respectfully submitted,

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